

The Introduction of Japanese Plants Into North America

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Abstract This article describes the history of plant introductions from Japan into North America, from the Perry Expedition in 1854 through the collections of George Rogers Hall of Bristol, Rhode Island and Thomas Hogg of New York City between 1861 and 1875. Both men sent plants to the innovative nurseryman, Samuel Bowne Parsons of Flushing, Long Island, who propagated and sold them to the gardening public. This process, which took more than twenty years from initial collection through commercial distribution, succeeded in adding innumerable Japanese species into the ornamental landscapes of North America, including Japanese maple, kousa dogwood, panicle hydrangea, and Sawara cypress. Unfortunately these early introductions also included a number of species which escaped cultivation and have become infamously invasive, including oriental bittersweet, kudzu, porcelain berry and Japanese honeysuckle. The pioneering work of these three horticulturists—compounded over the past hundred and fifty years—has had a profound impact on both cultivated and wild landscapes across North America.

Keywords George Rogers Hall · James Hogg · Thomas Hogg · Invasive species · Japanese horticulture · Kissena nurseries · New York Botanical Garden · Samuel B. Parsons · Samuel Parsons, Jr.

Introduction

Landscape gardening—the large-scale planting of trees, shrubs and lawns for ornamental purposes—did not really become popular in the United States until after the Revolutionary War, once the American economy got back on its feet and commercial ties with England were reestablished. Prior to the Revolution, the most famous botanical institution in the colonies was Bartram’s Garden along the Schuylkill River in Philadelphia, established by John Bartram in 1728 and operated by various family members through 1850. During this time period, Bartram’s Garden served as a center for the collection and cultivation of native North American plants and for their dissemination to wealthy collectors in Europe and North America (Hedrick, 1950).

Following the Revolution, William Hamilton of Philadelphia was one of the first Americans to take a serious interest in the field of landscape gardening. He lived in

England from 1784 to 86 and visited many of the great country estates; he also used the opportunity to procure plants from British nurseries for his own estate, *The Woodlands*, located on the banks of the Schuylkill River, about a mile from Bartram's Garden. From the 1790s through his death in 1813, Hamilton's home was considered one of the young republic's premier horticultural showplaces and he is generally credited with introducing at least three Asian trees into North America from Europe, the ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*), the tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) and the paper mulberry (*Broussonetia papyrifera*) as well as the Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*) and Lombardy poplar (*Populus nigra* 'Italica') (Downing, 1875; Smith, 1905; Stetson, 1949). He was the leading horticulturist of his day and was good friends with Thomas Jefferson, who shared a portion of the seeds collected by the Lewis and Clark Expedition with him (Hedrick, 1950).

William Prince of Flushing, Long Island, is credited with establishing the first truly commercial nursery in North America when he turned his father's private garden/nursery into the famous Prince Nursery in the 1750s (Hedrick, 1950; Disponzio, 2016). The nursery focused on fruit trees imported from Europe, and its large selection of plants attracted the likes of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson as customers. In 1793, William Prince's two sons split up the nursery and William Jr. established the *Linnaean Botanic Garden and Nursery* with a greatly increased number of ornamental (non-fruit) trees offered for sale. It was the largest nursery in the country at the time, as evidenced by an advertisement that offered 10,000 Lombardy poplars—ten to seventeen feet in height—for sale in 1798. As for Asian species, the nursery is credited with introducing the golden rain tree (*Koelreuteria paniculata*) from Europe and with popularizing the use of tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) as a street tree in the 1820s (Browne, 1846; Prince, 1861; Rehder, 1946; Hedrick, 1950). In the 1830s, the nursery invested heavily in the propagation and production of the marginally hardy 'Multicaulis' cultivar of Chinese mulberry (*Morus alba*) for feeding silkworm larvae and nearly went bankrupt when the speculative "silk bubble" burst in 1839 (Hedrick, 1950).

The Rise of American Horticulture

Societies for the promotion of agriculture began forming in the 1780s and 90s—initially affiliated with organizations devoted to the study of science and natural history, including the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia (founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1743) and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in Massachusetts (founded in 1780). Horticultural Societies dedicated exclusively to the cultivation of plants for food and ornament emerged at a later date, first in New York City in 1818 (incorporated in 1822), followed by Philadelphia (1827), Geneva, New York (1828), Albany, New York (1829) and Boston (1829) (Hedrick, 1950). The New York Horticultural Society was the most famous of these societies, having been founded by the famous physician, Dr. David Hosack, who had personally established the Elgin Botanic Garden for the cultivation of medicinal plants in 1801. The state of New York took over this garden in 1810 and made it part of the College of Physicians and Surgeons; in 1814 it became part of Columbia University. The Elgin Botanic Garden catalog from 1811 lists numerous Asian plants including *Gleditsia sinensis*, *Rosa multiflora*, *Hydrangea macrophylla* and *Styphnolobium* (*Sophora*) *japonica*, all imported from Europe (Rehder, 1946; Hedrick, 1950).

In the 1840s and 50s, as the populations of northeastern American cities were expanding dramatically as result of immigration from Europe, wealthy families who could afford it were leaving the crowded, unsanitary urban areas for the surrounding countryside where their dreams of a pastoral retreat could be realized. With tasteful guidance provided by Andrew Jackson Downing in his 1841 classic, *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening*, the landscapes surrounding these new estates were planted with a mixture of lawn, trees and shrubs in a “picturesque” style. Downing, who started out as a nurseryman in Newburg, New York, founded the journal, *The Horticulturist*, in 1846 and was America’s leading advocate for public parks—including Central Park—prior to his untimely death in 1852 (Major, 1997; O’Malley, 2007).

Downing’s ideas about landscape were heavily influenced by the writings of the Scottish horticulturist, J. C. Loudon and by the work of the Belgian-born landscape gardener-nurseryman André Parmentier, who had immigrated to the United States in 1824. With plants supplied by his brother in Belgium, Parmentier established a “Horticultural Botanical Garden” in Brooklyn in 1825 and became one of America’s earliest practitioners of landscape gardening. His most famous plant introduction was the above mentioned ‘Multicaulis’ cultivar of the Chinese mulberry (*Morus alba*) in 1828 which he promoted as the ideal plant for feeding silkworm larvae (Browne, 1846). Parmentier’s best known design work was done at Dr. Hosack’s *Hyde Park* estate along the Hudson River north of New York which transformed the grounds into one of the major horticultural showpieces of its day, with extensive landscape, garden and greenhouse plantings (Downing, 1875; O’Malley, 2007).

Relatively few Asian trees were available for planting when the first edition of Downing’s *Landscape Gardening* book came out in 1841, including: *Ailanthus altissima*, *Broussonetia papyrifera*, *Ginkgo biloba*, *Gleditsia sinensis*, *Magnolia denudata* and *liliflora* (and their hybrid, *x soulangeana*), *Morus alba*, *Platycladus orientalis* and *Salix babylonica*. Downing added *Styphnolobium* (*Sophora*) *japonicum* and *Paulownia tomentosa* to the list in the 1849 (4th) edition, but noted that they were still rare in cultivation. The editor of the sixth edition (1859), H. W. Sargent, added a number of Asian conifers to an appendix to the book, including *Cephalotaxus fortunei*, *Cryptomeria japonica*, *Juniperus chinensis*, *Torreya grandis*, *Cunninghamia lanceolata* and *Thuopsis dolabrata*, all imported into the United States from English nurseries. The first four of these species had been originally collected in China by the indefatigable Scotsman, Robert Fortune during the course of his several trips to that country in the 1840s and 50s.

As for the introduction of Japanese plants into Europe, the German physician Philipp von Siebold, who worked for the Dutch East India Company in Japan from 1823 to 1829, deserves the lion’s share of the credit. Von Siebold had a strong interest in botany and natural history and collected many plants during his time in Japan that he cultivated in his garden in the treaty port of Deshima. Von Siebold was expelled from Japan in 1829 for espionage but managed to pack up about 500 plants from his garden for shipment back to Holland, of which about half reached the botanical garden in Ghent alive. He eventually settled in Leiden and in 1844 established Von Siebold & Company to sell plants that he had either collected or imported from Japan and cultivated in his “Jardin d’Acclimatation” (Siebold, 1863; Compton & Thijssse, 2013). Von Siebold’s introductions began arriving in North American in the 1840s,

including *Paulownia tomentosa* in 1843 (Allen, 1843; Browne, 1846) and a selection of Japanese lilies prior to 1848 (Wilder, 1848). His monumental and beautifully illustrated *Flora Japonica*, written with Zuccarini and published between 1835 and 1870, was a primary source of information about Japanese plants for western botanists.

First Direct Contact with Japan

The United States government established diplomat relations with Japan through the efforts of Commodore Matthew Perry who, under the threat of military force, negotiated the Treaty of Kanagawa on March 31, 1854. Perry's expedition also had a scientific component in the person of its agricultural expert, Dr. James Morrow (Fig. 1) whose various (unpaid) jobs included demonstrating the use of various agricultural implements, distributing seeds of various crop plants as gifts to local officials and collecting herbarium specimens of the local vegetation whenever possible. Japanese officials reciprocated by presenting Morrow with more than 200 seed lots of various Japanese vegetables, some of which he shipped directly to farmers and nurserymen in New York, Philadelphia and South Carolina and the remainder of which he delivered to the U. S. Patent Office upon his return to Washington, D. C. (Cole, 1947).

During the course of the expedition, Morrow managed to collect "between three & four hundred living plants" from the islands of Java and St. Helena as well as from coastal China, Okinawa and Japan (Cole, 1947). Relatively few of these collections came from Japan because the expedition's time in that country—from February 11 through June 23—was not great for gathering plants and because the Japanese had "rigid laws" regulating the sale of any of their domestic products to foreigners. The vast majority of the living plants that Morrow collected—twelve boxes—came from China and consisted mostly fruit trees and lilies; only one box of plants came from Okinawa and Japan and none of its contents were identified (Cole, 1947).

Upon Perry's return to Washington in January 1855, Morrow deposited the expedition's living plants "in the government hot-houses near the capitol" (Cole, 1947). The United States Congress—in a show of appreciation—appropriated \$1500 to the United States Botanical Garden for the "erection of a suitable house for plants recently brought from Japan for the United States" (Fallen, 2006). Despite this generous financial allocation, there is no evidence that the living plants collected by the Perry expedition had any impact on the horticultural industry of the day. It seems likely that some combination of political wrangling plus an ignorance about how to propagate the plants prevented them from ever being widely distributed, if indeed they were distributed at all.

In addition to the seeds and plants mentioned above, Morrow and another crew member, the expedition's translator S. Wells Williams, collected a number of herbarium specimens from wild plants growing in the vicinity of the treaty ports of Kanagawa, Yokohama, Shimoda and, on the island of Hokkaido, Hakodate. Upon returning home, a dispute between Perry and Morrow over ownership of the specimens broke out which delayed their processing. Eventually a small selection of the specimens—consisting of 332 sheets out of a total of 1500 to 2000—ended up in the hands of Williams's old classmate, Asa Gray, a Professor of Botany at Harvard College. In an article that was part of the final Perry expedition report published in 1856, Gray provided names for all the plants and described 41 new species and one new genus (Gray, 1856; Hung, 2013).



Fig. 1 Portrait of Dr. James Morrow from: *A Scientist with Perry in Japan, The Journal of Dr. James Morrow*, edited by A. B. Cole (1947)

A second American flotilla, the United States Surveying Expedition to the North Pacific, landed in Japan in May 1855. Fortunately there was an experienced plant collector on board, Charles Wright, who had been personally trained by Professor Gray. Despite many long delays and a traumatic, mid-voyage change in command, Wright was able to make a large collection of herbarium specimens of Japanese plants from around the port cities of Yokohama, Shimoda and Hakodate, the same areas visited by Morrow and Williams. Unlike Commodore Perry, however, the leader of the second expedition to Japan, Commodore John Rodgers, gave Wright considerable freedom to

collect on shore as well as permission to publish his discoveries in private journals. (Dupree, 1959; Hung, 2013).

When Gray got access to Wright's extensive collection of specimens in 1857, he focused his full intellectual prowess on identifying the plants and analyzing their relationships to species that grew in eastern North America. Gray had been well aware of the similarity of the two floras for many years but was unable to make much progress on explaining the pattern because of the lack of documentation of the Japanese flora (Dupree, 1959; Hung, 2013). Wright's herbarium specimens were a game changer for Gary and he published a revolutionary paper in January 1859 that hypothesized that the current vegetation patterns found in eastern Asia and eastern North America strongly suggested that the two floras must have been connected in past geological epochs. The article caused something of a sensation when it came out and was used to support the theory of evolution that his friend and colleague Charles Darwin published later that year in *On the Origin of Species* (Gray, 1859; Dupree, 1959; Hung, 2013).

The Emergence of Suburban Horticulture

While Commodore Perry is credited with establishing America's official relationship with Japan through the Treaty of Kanagawa—signed on March 31, 1854—it really wasn't until July 29, 1858, with the signing of the Treaty of Amity and Commerce, that Japan fully opened its doors to Western influence. This treaty was negotiated by America's Consul General to Japan, Townsend Harris, and it allowed for the exchange of diplomats; set low import-export duties on trade goods; and established four American treaty ports where foreign residents had extra-territoriality rights, freedom of religious expression, and were allowed to lease land and buy or build buildings (Griffis, 1895).

Horticulturists of the day were particularly keen to take advantage of the opening with Japan and began visiting the country as soon as the Harris Treaty was signed. The first post-Perry shipments of living Japanese plants arrived in North America between 1861 and 1863. As groundbreaking as these early collections were, they had no immediate impact on the horticultural world mainly because the country was in the midst of the Civil War and because the people who received the plants needed time to figure out how to grow and propagate them.

Following the Civil War's conclusion in 1865, prosperity returned to the northeast, sparking a building boom and a renewal of interest in horticulture and landscape gardening. In 1873, Frank J. Scott published a popular, six-hundred-page tome on *The Art of Beautifying Suburban Home Grounds of Small Extent*. The book adapted Downing's concept of the picturesque to the smaller properties of the emerging middle class and greatly expanded the list of plants that could be used to create the desired landscape effects. The nursery industry of the day expanded to meet the growing demand for plants and New York City's Central Park, designed and constructed between 1858 and 1873 under the supervision of Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, set a standard for good taste that people could readily see and experience.

The 1870s through the 1890s were heady times for American nurseries as exotic plants flooded in from both Europe and Asia (along with their associated pests and pathogens). With these new plants came a new way of thinking about garden design, heavily influenced by the writings of the Irish gardener and prolific author and

journalist, William Robinson who described strategies for beautifying "groves and shrubberies by the naturalization of hardy exotic plants" in his phenomenally popular 1870 book, *The Wild Garden*. As Robinson defined it, wild gardening consisted of, "naturalizing or making wild innumerable beautiful natives of many regions of the earth in our woods, wild and semi-wild places, rougher parts of pleasure grounds, etc." In other words, he advocated using plants that could grow under difficult conditions and would spread on their own.

This was also a time when the above mentioned Horticultural Societies—particularly those in Boston, Philadelphia and New York—reached the peak of their influence. They sponsored multiple public "flower shows" throughout the year where local growers competed for top honors in numerous categories of gardening and agriculture. The famous Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876, in particular, provided the first national platform for the burgeoning nursery industry to display newly introduced plants, and the popular Japanese exhibit—which featured an authentic house with a small attached garden—exposed curious Americans to the refined aesthetics of that culture (Ingram, 1876; Del Tredici, 2006).

The remainder of this article focuses specifically on the introduction of Japanese plants into the United States by Dr. George Rogers Hall of Bristol, Rhode Island and Thomas Hogg, Jr. of New York City between 1861 and 1875, and their subsequent propagation and distribution by the nurseryman, Samuel Bowne Parsons of Flushing, New York. Together these three men epitomize the spirit of the time when horticulture was a cutting-edge science and questions of taste were hotly debated in the popular press—it was the time when the modern, globalized American landscape was born.

The First Japanese Plants Come to America

Dr. George Rogers Hall (1820–1899) sent his first shipment of living Japanese plants to North America in 1861 (Fig. 2). Dr. Hall was born in Bristol, Rhode Island in March 1820 and graduated from Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut in 1842 and from Harvard Medical School 1846. Following his graduation, Hall moved to Shanghai, China where he set up a practice in the foreign quarter and build himself a home and office. Hall returned briefly to the United States in 1850 to marry Helen Beal of Kingston, Massachusetts, and the couple returned to Shanghai where they raised three sons. Because of the political unrest that was sweeping China at the time, Helen and the children returned to the United States in 1854, and not long after their departure Hall made the decision to abandon medicine in favor of international trade. He joined forces with a Massachusetts native, Edward Cunningham, in the business of exporting Japanese and Chinese decorative arts, including porcelain, lacquer ware, jade, bronzes, and ivory, as well as in speculating in the exchange of gold and silver (Howe, 1923; Butler, 2016).

In 1859, having accumulated a "good deal of money," Hall left Shanghai for Japan—which had opened up to American business in July of that year—and went to work for Walsh & Co., an American trading company. Hall acquired a prominent plot of ground on the Bund in Yokohama and built himself a "fine house" with a large garden where he could indulge his burgeoning interest in horticulture (Howe, 1923; Butler, 2016). Hall interacted with European plant collectors who were in Japan at



Fig. 2 Portrait of Dr. George Rogers Hall, courtesy of the Archives of the Arnold Arboretum

the same time, most notably the Scotsman Robert Fortune (Fig. 3), who states in his book, *Yedo and Peking* (1863), that Dr. Hall possessed, "a very interesting collection of the plants of Japan, and to whom I am indebted for much valuable information and assistance." Among the plants that Hall was growing was a male clone of *Acuba*



Fig. 3 Portrait of Robert Fortune at age 66 from: *Journal of Horticulture, Cottage Gardener, and Home Farmer*, III, vol. 38 (1899)

japonica that Fortune had been looking for but been unable to locate. Hall gave Fortune a piece of it, thereby assuring the future production of a “profusion of crimson berries” by the all-female English population of the species.

In another section of *Yedo and Peking*, Fortune describes in detail the nature of Hall’s assistance: “As I had now secured living specimens and seeds of all the ornamental trees and shrubs of this part of Japan which I was likely to meet with at this season of the year [December 1860], the whole were removed across the bay to Yokuhama [sic], and placed for safely in Dr. Hall’s garden, until Ward’s cases were ready for their reception.” The cases that Fortune was referring to were the glass-covered boxes developed by a London physician, Nathaniel Ward, that made it possible for living plants to survive four to five month-long ocean voyages by providing them with access to sunshine while simultaneously protecting them from salt spray and reducing their water needs to zero given that the cases were typically never opened after they were sealed (Fig. 4). Fortune had extensive experience using Wardian cases in shipping ornamental plants from China to England during the 1840s and 50s as well as tea plants to other parts of Asia (Ward, 1852).

It seems likely that Fortune shared some of his collections with Hall in return for his taking care of them. It also seems likely that Hall might have gotten plants and/or seeds from John Gould Veitch who had been collecting in Japan for his family’s nursery in

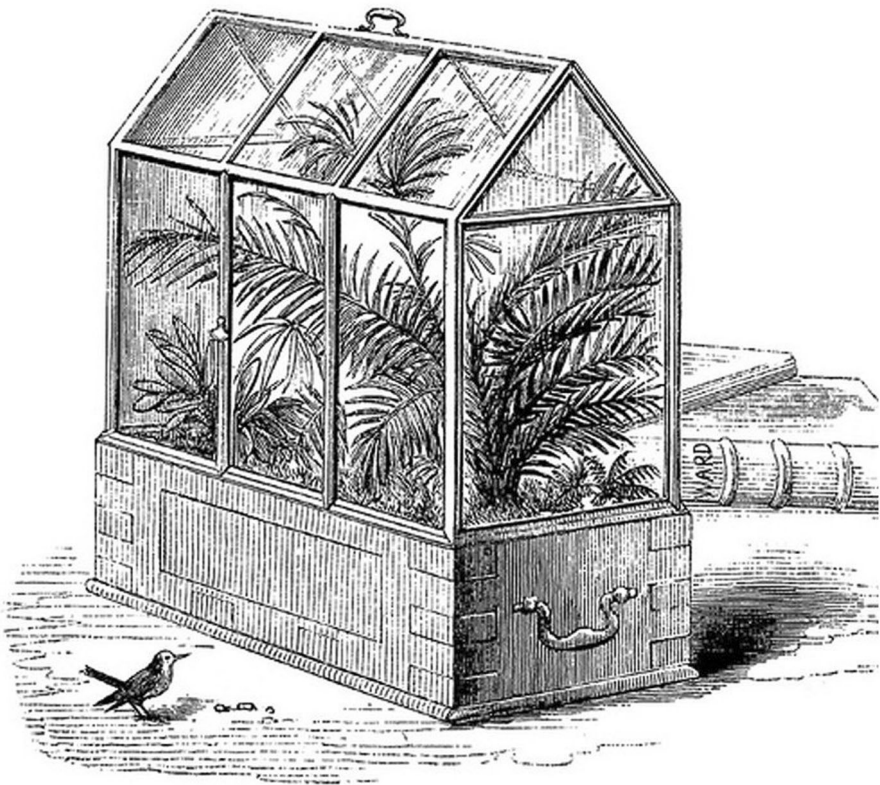


Fig. 4 Illustration of a Wardian case from: *On the Growth of Plants in Closely Glazed Cases*, 2nd edition by Nathaniel B. Ward (1852)

the fall of 1860 and left Yokohama with Fortune when the construction of their Wardian cases was finally finished in December:

The steam-ship 'England,' Captain Dundas, being about to return to Shanghae [sic], I availed myself of the opportunity to go over to that port with my collections, in order to ship them for England, there being at yet no means of sending them direct from Japan. Mr. Veitch had also put his plants on board the same vessel, so that the whole of the poop was lined with glass cases crammed full of the natural productions of Japan."

Sometime in early 1861, shortly after Fortune and Veitch had left Yokohama, Hall dispatched his first consignment of Japanese plants to America, packed in the glass-covered "Wardian cases" that Fortune had undoubtedly helped him procure. The plants were sent to Boston, Massachusetts under the care of F. Gordon Dexter, who reached his destination some two to three months later (Howe, 1923). Dexter had been instructed to deliver the plants to Mr. Francis Lee of Chestnut Hill, but by the time he arrived, Lee had enlisted in the Union Army and was unable to care for them. Fortunately, Lee had made arrangements for the plants to be delivered to his neighbor and former Harvard classmate, Francis Parkman, the famous historian and a noted horticulturist. Parkman was an active member of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society and planted the amazing windfall in his garden near Jamaica Pond, just outside of Boston (Parkman 1862a, b). The plants flourished under his care and, once the war ended, they drew the attention of the local horticultural community, no doubt including his neighbor and the future director of the Arnold Arboretum, Charles Sprague Sargent (Howe, 1923; Wright, 1949; Whitehill, 1973).

Dr. Hall left Japan on January 3, 1862 with a second collection of plants and seeds in tow and arrived in the United States in March (Notehelfer, 2001). After landing in New York, Hall headed straight for the office of Samuel Bowne Parsons of Parsons & Sons Nursery in Flushing (Fig. 5). Parsons describes the encounter in the April 1862 issue of *The Horticulturist*:

A few days since, while sitting in our office, there walked in a gentleman, with an intelligent face, and frank, pleasant manner, introducing himself as Dr. Hall, of Japan, whom we had for some time well known by reputation. In the course of much pleasant conversation about the climate and productions of that country, he informed us that for the past two years he had resided at Yokohama, and being greatly interested in trees and plants, had, for his own amusement, collected in his garden all of any interest which Japan contained...These plants and seeds he had brought with him, except some six Wardian cases yet to arrive, and proposed to place them all in our hands for propagation and culture.

Parsons goes on to provide a breathless description of the thrill he experienced while unpacking Hall's boxes the following day:



Fig. 5 Portrait of Samuel Bowne Parsons from Meehan (1887)

It you have ever seen the eagerness with which a connoisseur in pictures superintends the unpacking of some gems of art, among which he thinks he may possibly find an original of Raphael or Murillo, you will have some idea of the interest with which all, both employers and propagators, surrounded those cases while they were being opened.

Hall's two historic plant shipments contained the first introduction of many Japanese species and cultivars into North America, including the following flowering trees and shrubs: Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum* and several of its cultivars), variegated kousa

dogwood (*Cornus kousa variegata*), buttercup winterhazel (*Corylopsis pauciflora*), Japanese raisin tree (*Hovenia dulcis*), peegee hydrangea (*Hydrangea paniculata* var. *grandiflora*), star magnolia (*Magnolia stellata*), kobus magnolia (*Magnolia kobus*), Parkman crabapple (*Malus halliana* var. *parkmanii*), Daimyo oak (*Quercus dentata*), Japanese wisteria cultivars (*Wisteria floribunda*), Japanese zelkova (*Zelkova serrata*) and the infamously invasive Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica* var. *halliana*). Among conifers, he introduced hinoki cypress (*Chamaecyparis obtusa*), sawara cypress cultivars (*Chamaecyparis pisifera*), several cultivars of *Cryptomeria japonica*, umbrella pine (*Sciadopitys verticillata*), compact Japanese yew (*Taxus cuspidata* var. *nana*) and several cultivars of *Thujaopsis dolobrata*. (S. B. Parsons, 1862; S., 1889; Sargent, 1892b; Howe, 1923).

While the Parsons' 1862 article makes it seem as though Hall waked into his office in Flushing out of the blue, the reality is that Parsons had established a prior connection with Hall. In a short article published in 1863, Parsons describes how he saw a letter in the *Gardener's Chronicle* from Robert Fortune (1861) extoling the virtues of the "Yeddo Vine" that he had seen in Japan and noting how he, Fortune, had encouraged Dr. Hall in late 1860 to introduce the grape into eastern North America because of its hardiness. Parsons goes on to note: "Having seen this article and desiring also other Japan plants, we wrote Minister [Townsend] Harris who handed our letter to Dr. Hall, then in Japan. The result was that in the spring of 1862, Dr. Hall walked into our office, and proposed to place in our hands a large variety of Japan plants. Among them was this "Yeddo Vine." So the story behind the story is that the savvy Samuel Parsons had actually recruited Hall to bring him plants—not vice versa. The specifics of the financial agreement the two men might have made are unknown, but their correspondence clearly suggests that he received some form of compensation or royalty from Parsons from the sale of plants that were successfully propagated (Butler, 2016; Disponzio, 2016).

Hall inherited his father's estate in Bristol in 1872 and thereafter began planting it with Japanese plants (Sargent, 1889a, 1892b; Howe, 1923). Remarkably, some of Hall's original plantings are still alive today, including a huge specimen of the above-mentioned compact Japanese yew (*Taxus cuspidata* 'Nana'), five gigantic specimens of *Zelkova serrata* with trunk diameters over a meter (Fig. 6), and a large sawara cypress, *Chamaecyparis pisifera*, with a large layered lower branch.

Thomas Hogg Sr. and His Two Sons

The second strand in the story of Japanese plants coming to America involves the family of Thomas Hogg, Sr. who was born in 1777 in Blackadder, Berwickshire, Scotland, about 50 miles southeast of Edinburgh (Fig. 7). As a young man, the elder Hogg moved to England to become an apprentice printer with the *Liverpool Mercury*. Finding this work not to his liking, he moved back to Scotland to learn the nursery trade as an apprentice for Dicksons' Nurseries near Hawick. Eventually he made his way to London where he became the greenhouse supervisor for one William Kent "who was said to have assembled the largest and most sophisticated private plant collection in England." In this position, Hogg made the acquaintance of many prominent botanists and horticulturists of the day and was elected a member of the Linnaean Society (M., 1855).



Fig. 6 One of the original *Zelkova serrata* trees at North Farm in Bristol, RI, planted by George Rogers Hall. Photo by P. Del Tredici (2016)

For unspecified health reasons, Hogg made the decision to immigrate to New York City, where he arrived in November 1820 with his wife and two young children, James (born December 1814) and Thomas Jr. (born February 6, 1820). In the spring of 1822, Hogg opened a florist and nursery business at the intersection of 23rd Street and Broadway, one of the first such establishments in the city (Henderson, 1880). He became good friends with Dr. David Hosack and the two men worked together to incorporate the New York Horticultural Society in 1822. In 1840, Hogg relocated his nursery to 79th Street at the East River (then known as Yorkville) and operated it with the help of his two sons (Downing, 1849; Whitehead, 2011).

Following Thomas Hogg Sr.'s sudden death on October 11, 1854, James and Thomas Jr. took over the nursery and operated it together until 1862 when President Abraham Lincoln appointed Thomas Hogg (Fig. 8) a United States Marshall assigned to the Japanese Consulate in Kanagawa. The job was not without its risks as several foreigners had been attacked and/or murdered in Japan during the preceding two years (Fortune, 1863; Notehelfer, 2001). Hogg occupied the post until 1869, during which time he sent a large number of plants and seeds back home to his brother in Yorkville.

In 1867, while Thomas was in Japan, James decided to close the family nursery and move to a property at the foot of 84th Street and the East River (M., 1855; Morong, 1893; Whitehead, 2011). It was at this location that he established a private garden to grow the plants his brother sent him (Sargent, 1893a; Thurber, 1875, 1881). According to Professor C. S. Sargent (1888b), this garden contained "more than 300 species and varieties of trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants, mostly from Japan and China. Most of these were the first



Fig. 7 Portrait of Thomas Hogg, Sr., courtesy of the Gray Herbarium of Harvard University

specimens of their kind to reach this country and many of them were received here some time before their introduction into Europe." Sargent goes on to note that:

Some years ago Mr. Hogg disposed of the place [c. 1876], and the trees and shrubs have been somewhat neglected, and yet the collection has continued to be a most interesting one. But the time has come when the space must be covered with buildings and through the efforts of Mr. Hogg the trees and shrubs were



Fig. 8 Portrait of Thomas Hogg, Jr. (circa 1887), courtesy of the LuEsther T. Mertz Library of the New York Botanical Garden

presented to the New York Park Department and most of them have been carefully removed to the north-eastern part of Central Park, where extensive improvements are in progress. Among the trees are fifteen varieties of the Japanese Maple which are specially interesting as first importations. The first *Magnolia hypoleuca* was too large for removal and efforts will be made to protect it where it stands. A Japanese *Styrax* of extraordinary size and a remarkable Tree Peony with large single purple flowers are among the other treasures.

Continuing the tradition established by their father, both Hogg brothers played prominent roles in the horticultural/botanical life of New York City. James served on the first Board of Commissioners for Central Park from May 1857 through May 1859, when he resigned amidst a controversy surrounding the passage of a New York State Senate bill authorizing the enlargement of Central Park (Anonymous, 1860). In 1870, James became one of the founding members of the Torrey Botanical Club. Prior to that—perhaps as early as 1858—he and his brother Thomas had been part of an “informal band of [plant] collectors,” centered around Professor John Torrey of Columbia University, who were keenly interested in the flora of New York State (Burgess, 1900). James Hogg served as the editor of the monthly magazine *The American Garden* (Fig. 9) from September 1874 through June 1875 and published a popular book titled, *The Vegetable Garden* in 1877. He died on July 4, 1889, at the age of 74 (Whitehead, 2011).

Thomas Hogg was an active member of both the New York Horticultural Society as well as the Torrey Botanical Club which he joined in 1882, following several years of travelling the world. Hogg served as Vice President of the Club from 1886 through the time of his death on December 30, 1892 at the age of 72 (Morong, 1893). As an officer of the Club and chairman of its “Botanical Garden Committee,” Hogg was instrumental in helping establish the New York Botanical Garden (Britton, 1915). George Thurber, who served as president of the Torrey Botanical Club from 1873 to 1880, described Thomas Hogg as, “a gentleman who shuns notoriety as much as others seek it, and of whom it is but simple justice to say that horticulture is as much indebted to him, as to any one for the choice Japanese plants that have been introduced within the last 15 years (Thurber, 1876a).” A year later, Thurber (1877a) elevated Hogg to a higher moral plane after complaining about the fact that the British Royal Horticultural Society failed to give him proper credit for introducing the variegated eulalia grass (*Miscanthus sinensis* ‘Zebrina’):

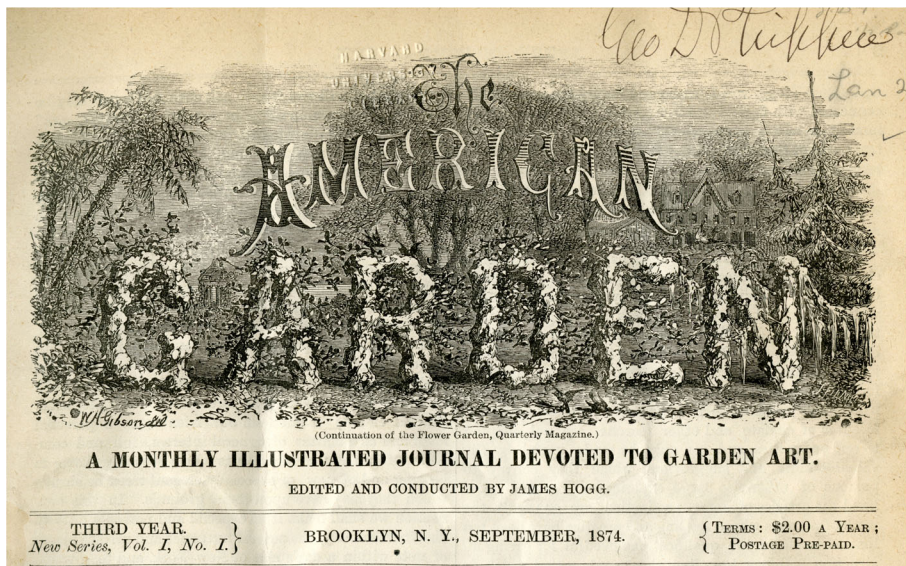


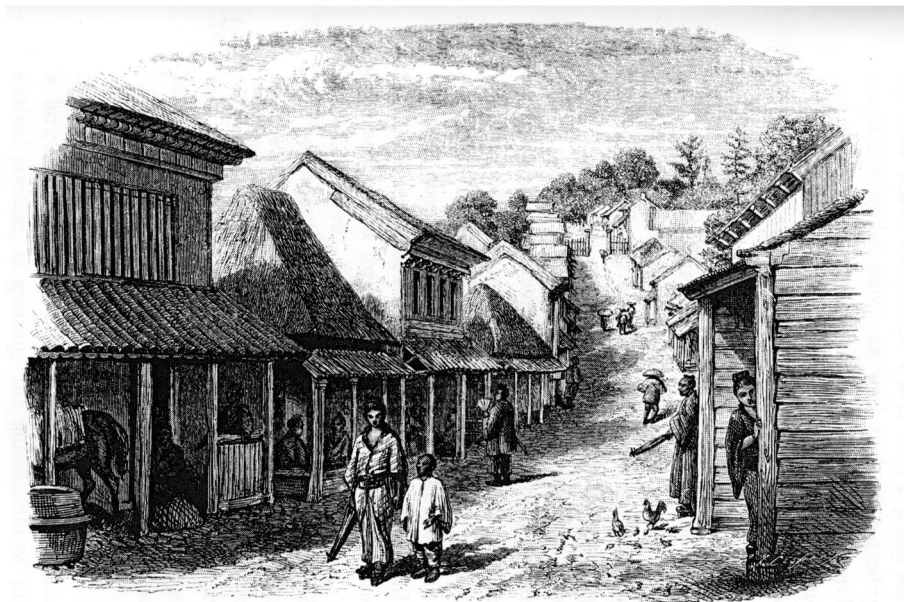
Fig. 9 Masthead of *The American Garden*, vol. 1, issue 1, September, 1874

Mr. Thomas Hogg has added a great many fine plants to our collections, and has distributed many of them among plant lovers with a liberality most unusual. While others with his opportunities would have received a handsome sum for the plants, he has worked, like the true horticulturalist that he is, without looking constantly through gold-bowed glasses, and we insist that, if he has not made money, he shall at least have proper credit every time that it is due.

Thomas Hogg Jr. in Japan

Thomas Hogg arrived in Kanagawa, Japan in October 1862, some ten months after Dr. Hall had departed that country (Fig. 10). Fortune and Veitch were gone as well, but Carl Maximowicz, who was collecting plants for the St. Petersburg Botanical Garden in Russia, was still there and Hogg wasted no time in making his acquaintance. In one of his first letters home—less than two weeks after his arrival—Hogg wrote (1863a):

There is a Russian Botanist (Mr. Macimovitch) [sic] now here making a collection of living and dried plants for a Society in St. Petersburg. He has been in the country three years, and is now about returning home by the way of Nagasaki. He has been very industrious, and has procured many valuable things. I frequently call upon him, and find him very communicative, and have obtained much valuable information from him.



STREET IN KANAGAWA.—THE TOKAIDO OR IMPERIAL HIGHWAY.

Page 42.

Fig. 10 "Street in Kanagawa—The Tokaido or Imperial Highway" from: *Yedo and Peking* by Robert Fortune (1863)

Less than a month after his arrival, on November 10, 1862, Thomas Hogg dispatched his first shipment of plants from Japan to his brother James, who published a partial inventory of its contents in the February 1863 issue of *The Horticulturist*. According to James, Thomas "has already formed some acquaintance with some of the native gardeners, and enlisted them in his service for procuring or obtaining new and rare things for him. Some of the seeds now on the way, were collected for him at Fusi Yama [Mt. Fuji], by a Japanese gardener." James' list—which was clearly published before the plants arrived—is the main source of information about Thomas Hogg's early plant collecting activities. Seven of Thomas' letters home—published *The Horticulturist* and *The Garden's Monthly*—are filled with detailed descriptions of Japanese gardens and horticultural techniques as well as of his travels through the countryside, but provide relatively little specific information about the plants he was sending to America (T. Hogg, 1863a, b, c, 1864a, b, 1865, 1866). The only articles that Hogg himself published about his Japanese plant collecting activities appeared in 1879, four years after he returned home (T. Hogg, 1879a, b). Hogg was motivated to write these articles to correct an erroneous statement by Professor C. S. Sargent of the Arnold Arboretum that credited William S. Clark of the Massachusetts Agricultural College for introducing *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*, *Sciadopitys veticillata* and *Schizophragma hydrangeoides* into North America (Sargent, 1879). Hogg "emphatically" refuted Sargent's statement by noting that he had sent all three of these species to his brother in the 1860s, well before Clark arrived in Japan.¹

Hogg's second trip to Japan lasted two years—through the end of 1875—during which time he worked as an independent advisor to the Japanese Customs Service. In this new position, Hogg had more freedom to travel around the country than he had had as a U.S. Marshall in Kanagawa and more opportunities to collect plants (Meehan, 1874; Morong, 1893). Hogg visited the island of Hokkaido during this second trip and he met the German-American horticulturist, Louis Boehmer, who noted that he "frequently met Mr. Hogg here collecting [on Hokkaido]. He must have introduced many of our species (Boehmer, 1879)." Boehmer had come to Japan at the behest of the Japanese government to introduce western horticultural into the country and settled in Hokkaido in 1874. He spent several years exploring the island before moving to Yokohama where he established a nursery in 1882 (Böhmer 1876; Tsukamoto & Creech, 2015).

There is no evidence that Hogg shipped any living plants back to America during his second visit to Japan. Instead he seems to have focused his attention on collecting seed from wild plants growing in areas beyond the treaty ports where both he and George Rogers Hall had done most of their collecting during the 1860s. Indeed, the only reference Hogg's plant collecting activities during his second sojourn in Japan comes from S. B. Parsons who stated in April 1875 that Hogg had sent him "seeds of about 150 sorts of hardy trees and shrubs which, when grown, will doubtless produce many rare and valuable things" (S. B. Parsons, 1875). The date of Parsons' article suggests that the seeds were collected during the fall of 1874 and there is no evidence that Hogg sent seeds to anybody other than Parsons.

¹ Clark spent eight months on the island of Hokkaido from 1876 to 1877 where he helped establish the Sapporo Agricultural College. He sent seeds of at least thirty plants to the Arnold Arboretum in Boston and deserves credit for introducing *Actinidia arguta* [*A. polygama*] and *Syringa reticulata* [*S. japonica*] into cultivation in North America (Clark, 1878; Sargent, 1911).

Samuel Bowne Parsons

The original Parsons & Company Nursery in Flushing, New York, was established in 1839 by the elder Samuel Parsons (1774–1841) in partnership with his two sons, Samuel Bowne (1819–1906) and Robert Bowne (1821–1898). Samuel and Robert took over the operation of the nursery in 1841 following their father's death (Meehan, 1887; M. Parsons, 1926). The nursery developed a tradition of propagating and introducing exotic ornamentals from Europe, including *Paulownia tomentosa* (Allen, 1843; Browne, 1846) and *Fagus sylvatica* 'Pendula' (Scott, 1873; Disponzio, 2016), as well as horticultural selections of native species such as the red-flowered American dogwood (*Cornus florida* 'Rubra') and Sargent's weeping hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis* 'Pendula') (S., 1889; Stout, 1939; Del Tredici, 1983) (Fig. 11). It was also the first American nursery to propagate and distribute reliably hardy, evergreen rhododendrons and it supplied many of the trees and shrubs used by F. L. Olmsted and Calvert Vaux for planting Central Park in Manhattan and Prospect Park in Brooklyn (Disponzio, 2016). Thomas Meehan visited Parsons' Nursery in the summer of 1861 and provided a vivid description of the rare and unusual plants then growing outdoors and under glass (Meehan, 1861).

In 1839, as a young man of twenty, Samuel B. Parsons sailed to St. Croix where he oversaw the planting of some 25,000 "mulberry buds" (undoubtedly the marginally hardy 'Multicaulis' variety) in what was most likely an attempt to salvage some of his nursery's investment in a crop that had lost most of its value as a result of the bursting of the 1830s "silk bubble" (Hedrick 1950). He spent the next year travelling around the Caribbean, and in 1841 he returned to Flushing to take up a role in running the family nursery. Parsons travelled to Europe in 1845 and 1847 to study horticultural practices on the continent. In between these two trips he went to Florida, then a "howling wilderness," to search for land suitable for growing oranges; he purchased 160 acres of land "near Blue Spring" for \$160 but never got around to planting it because of scale insect problems. Parsons' travels concluded in 1859 with a final trip to Europe at the behest of the U. S. Government to study the agricultural and horticultural practices of Sicily and the Ionian Islands off the coast of Greece (Meehan, 1887).

Parsons published *The Rose: Its History, Poetry, Culture and Classification* in 1847, which evolved into the popular classic, *Parsons on the Rose* in 1888. He separated himself financially from his brother Robert in 1872 and established "S. B. Parsons & Sons, Kissena Nurseries" on land located about a mile and a half from his original family nursery (Williams, 1872). The nursery ceased operation in 1906 following Samuel's death and the land was eventually bought—between 1907 and 1909—by New York City for park purposes. Over time, the city added playgrounds, tennis courts and roadways to the area—which it rechristened Kissena Park (Disponzio, 2016). A 14-acre "historic tree grove," fortunately, was preserved as an arboretum and many of its historically important trees imported directly from Japan are still alive today, including remnants of old nursery rows of *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*, *Acer palmatum* and *Photina villosa* and mature specimens of *Acer japonicum*, *Magnolia obovata* and *Kalopanax septemlobus* (Croizat, 1936; Del Tredici, 2013) (Figs. 12 and 13).

It should come as no surprise that Thomas Hogg chose to send his Japanese plants and seeds to Samuel B. Parsons given that both of their families had long histories in the New York City nursery business and that Parsons had experience working with Japanese plants dating back to 1862, when he began working on the propagation of the plants presented to him by George Rogers Hall. With the establishment of Kissena



Fig. 11 "Evergreen-walk in Parsons' Nursery, Flushing, L. I." from: *The Art of Beautifying Suburban Home Grounds of Small Extent* by Frank J. Scott (1873)

Nurseries in 1873, Parsons was in a perfect position to capitalize on the passion for landscape gardening that emerged following the end of the Civil War. Wealthy gentlemen were building large estates for their families in and around New York City and Parsons, with a direct pipeline to Japanese plants through Thomas Hogg, was ready to meet the growing demand for horticultural novelties (S. B. Parsons, 1872). The advertisements for Kissena Nurseries on the back covers of the February through May 1876 issues of *The Gardener's Monthly* (Fig. 14) taped directly into this craze: "Their assortment of **RARE EVERGREENS** has long been known to be the most complete. They now have in cultivation a very large variety of hardy **Deciduous Trees and Shrubs**, numbering over **800** sorts, of which 300 sorts, one year grafted, and entirely new and have not yet been in their catalogue." In the same advertisement, Parsons touted his direct access to Japan: "Their Japanese Department now includes more than 150 varieties in addition to the above, and is being constantly enriched by Thomas Hogg, now in Japan. Many of these varieties are unknown in Europe."



Fig. 12 A row of katsura trees (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum*) at Kissena Park in Flushing left over from its days as a nursery. Photo by P. Del Tredici (2016)

Samuel B. Parsons was the preeminent woody plant nurseryman of his day and over a span of sixty plus years, introduced hundreds of new plants into commerce, and



Fig. 13 A row of Japanese maples (*Acer palmatum*) at Kissena Park in Flushing left over from its days as a nursery. Photo by P. Del Tredici (2013)

S. B. PARSONS & SONS,
Kissena Nurseries,
 Near **KISSENA STATION, FLUSHING, N. Y.,**

OFFER a very large assortment of **TREES and PLANTS** of all the best families. Nearly all of them have been two years transplanted, and their roots are thus in the very best possible condition for a second transplanting. Their assortment of **RARE EVERGREENS** has long been known to be the most complete. They now have in cultivation a very large variety of hardy

Deciduous Trees and Shrubs,

numbering over **800** sorts, of which **300** sorts, one year grafted, are entirely new and have not yet been in their catalogue.

Their **JAPANESE DEPARTMENT** now includes more than **150** varieties in addition to the above, and is being constantly enriched by **Thomas Hogg**, now in **Japan**. Many of these varieties are unknown in **Europe**. The celebrated **JAPANESE MAPLES** and **AZALEA MOLLIS** are alone worthy of a visit.

CAMELLIA JAPONICA and **AZALEA INDICA** can be advantageously shipped during **September, October and November**; **September** being preferred. These plants are carefully formed and trimmed, and their symmetry is recognized by all who see them.

Rhododendrons and other hardy **Evergreens** can be safely transplanted in **September**.

Estimates will be furnished for Planting Grounds under the care of an experienced Landscape Gardener, and much trouble thus saved to the owner.

Catalogues will be furnished to applicants by mail, and those who wish to visit the Nurseries will always find either one of the proprietors, or **J. R. Trumpy**, the well-known propagator of the old establishment. They can take the ferries at **34th Street** or **James' Slip**, which connect with the railroad, leaving the first a quarter of an hour, and the last half an hour before the departure of trains, which make the transit in half an hour. The Nursery is adjoining the **Kissena Station** and one and a half miles from the other stations.

Fig. 14 Kissena Nurseries back cover advertisement from: *Gardener's Monthly and Horticulturist*, February 1876

pioneered new techniques for the vegetative propagation of woody plants utilizing innovative greenhouse technology (Allen, 1843; X., 1873). **J. R. Trumpy** (1830–1913), the nursery's Swiss propagator, came to America in 1856, having been "brought over on a sailing vessel by **Mr. Samuel Bowne Parsons** from **Hugh Low & Co.**, London, England" (Fig. 15) (Stout, 1939). During his forty years working for Parsons, Trumpy is credited with working out the grafting protocols for Asian magnolias and azaleas as well as for evergreen rhododendrons. Trumpy also deserves credit for solving the particularly vexing problem of how to graft Japanese maples (*Acer palmatum*) which, in the 1870s, were widely considered to be of questionable hardiness and difficult to propagate (S. Parsons, 1880, 1881; Thurber, 1881). In the year 1888 alone it was reported that Trumpy "grafted 10,000 plants with his own hand" (S., 1889). That Parsons had complete confidence in Trumpy is exemplified by his statement that he placed the 150 lots of seed sent from Japan by **Thomas Hogg** "in the hands of our well-known and experienced propagator, and will, we hope, soon be ready for dissemination" (S. B. Parsons, 1875).

More Plants from Japan

Thomas Meehan was the first person to report the direct transfer of live Japanese plants from **Hogg** to **Parsons**: "We learn that **Thomas Hogg**, before leaving for **Japan** in **December [1873]**, placed his remarkable collection of Japanese hardy trees and shrubs in the hands of **S. B. Parsons & Sons**, at **Flushing**, for propagation" (Meehan, 1874).



Fig. 15 Portrait of J. R. Trumpy from: *Horticulture Magazine* (1913)

Meehan provided a partial list of the plants and concluded by noting that: "Mr. Hogg hopes to make more valuable collections, now that the interior of Japan is opened, which it is his intention to send to the same house for propagation. His old experience as one of the most intelligent cultivators which this country has known, will enable him to make judicious and discriminating selections from the large field in Japan."

A year later, in the April 1875 issue of *The American Garden* (edited by James Hogg), Parsons himself provided a comprehensive inventory of the Japanese plants

entrusted him by Thomas Hogg more than a year earlier (S. B. Parsons, 1875). The article lists more than sixty different kinds of woody plants—including both species and cultivars—plus "150 plants of these wonderfully beautiful Japanese Maples, some of which have leaves cut like the finest lace, with colors of the richest pink, scarlet, and purple." It also describes an unknown shrub that "bears immense quantities of fragrant white flowers, in a sort of panicle, and somewhat resembles a spirea in general appearance," a plant that was subsequently identified by the Arnold Arboretum as sapphire berry, *Symplocos paniculata*. Parsons' article is significant because it provides a detailed inventory of the surviving introductions from Thomas Hogg's first trip to Japan. Curiously, the article creates the distinct impression that he, Parsons, had just received Hogg's plants directly from Japan when, in fact, he had gotten them more than a year earlier from James Hogg's Manhattan garden:

Not long since there came to our packing house some cases of trees and shrubs collected by a well-known lover of plants now in Japan—Mr. Thomas Hogg. The chief of our propagating department had been anxiously expecting them for some weeks and his assistants were quickened into activity for uncovering and bringing them to light. As each plant was handed out by the eager hands of the packer, the exclamations of the group awaiting them gave some indication of the interest excited.

After listing all the plants he received from Hogg, Parsons concludes his article with the statement that, "Besides these plants, there were seeds of about 150 sorts of hardy trees and shrubs which, when grown, will doubtless produce many rare and valuable things. It is difficult to estimate too highly the value of the efforts which Mr. Hogg is making for the introduction of these new hard-wooded plants, many of which, are not yet known in Europe." The date of Parsons' *American Garden* article, April 1875, strongly suggests that the seeds he referred to, unlike the plants, had been collected in Japan by Thomas Hogg during the fall of 1874. Why Parsons chose to make it look like the plants from Hogg's first trip to Japan and the seeds from his second trip had arrived simultaneously is probably best explained by marketing considerations.

Josiah Hoopes visited Kissena Nurseries in the fall of 1875 and got to see Hogg's plant collection for himself in "a suite of cold-frames well filled with the largest collection of Japanese plants to be found—not only in the United States, but in Europe as well. They were sent home by that indefatigable collector Thos. Hogg, now a resident of Japan." The following year, Parsons put Thomas Hogg's plant collection on public display at the famous Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia where it was greeted with rave reviews from horticultural critics (Meehan, 1876; Saunders, 1878).

Samuel B. Parsons is clearly the central character in the story of the early importation of Japanese plants into America—propagating, popularizing and distributing both Hall's and Hogg's collections to the gardening public. It was a long process that began in 1862 with the receipt of Hall's second shipment Japanese plants and continued through 1875 with the receipt of plants and seeds from Thomas Hogg. All of these collections were propagated from the mid-1870s through the mid-1880s before they were finally ready for commercial distribution in the mid- to late-1880s. The final results of Parsons's sustained work with the Japanese plants collected by Hall and Hogg are best summarized in an article from

Garden and Forest in 1889 signed by "S.," the initial of the magazine's conductor and Director of the Arnold Arboretum, Professor C. S. Sargent:

As we stood by long rows of variegated Japan Quince, with foliage as bright as that of the Japan Maples which have been sent out from here in such great numbers, I asked Mr. Parsons how many of these Japanese trees and shrubs had been introduced through these nurseries. To this he was unable to give a full answer without an examination of his books, but I hope to furnish you at some time with a complete list of these introductions, as the record would be worth preserving. The catalogue would include many of our best and best-known shrubs. From Dr. Hall, for example, came in 1862: The double form of *Deutzia crenata*, *Hydrangea paniculata grandiflora*, *Magnolia stellata* and *M. Kobus*, five varieties of *Wistaria*; *Acer polymorphum* [*A. palmatum*], *Quercus dentata*, *Thuyopsis dolobrata*, *Sciadopitys verticillata* and *Lilium auratum*, eight bulbs of which were afterwards sold to a European firm at eighty dollars, in currency, each. Besides these and other, these nurseries received the seeds of many conifers from Dr. Hall. Among them, of *Picea Ayanensis* [*P. jezoensis*], *P. polita*, *Retinospora* [*Chamaecyparis*] *obtusata* and *Pinus Koraensis*.

The consignments from Mr. Thomas Hogg were much more important, including such prizes as twenty-five species and varieties of Maples, the Japanese Chestnut, the *Cercidiphyllum*, two varieties of *Benthamia* [*Cornus kousa*], the *Stuartia* [*pseudocamellia*], whose flowering last year created some sensation; *Daphne Genkwa*, *Deutzia scabra*, *Elaeagnus longipes* [*E. multiflora*], *Hydrangea paniculata*, *Styrax Japonica*, *Schizophragma hydrangeoides*, *Dimorphanthus Mandschuricus* [*Aralia elata*]; many fine conifers, including the Japanese Hemlock; nine varieties of *Retinospora*, *Pinus thunbergii*, *P. densiflora* and *Taxus cuspidata*. This by no means completes the list of hardy plants for which the horticultural world has to thank Mr. Hogg, not to speak of many kinds adapted to green-house culture, which were also sent out through the agency of these nurseries.

Samuel Parsons Jr., Landscape Architect

The final link in the Hogg-Parsons chain involves S. B. Parsons' son, Samuel Jr. (1844–1923) (Fig. 16), who grew up working in the family nursery under the tutelage of its propagator, J. R. Trumpy. Samuel graduated from the Sheffield Scientific School at Yale in 1862 with a bachelor's degree in philosophy and returned home to work on the nursery for "two or three years and then bought a farm and lived on it for five or six years." Following these experiences, around 1871 or 72, he decided to take up the practice of landscape gardening and sought out the advice of Calvert Vaux, "whose ripe knowledge of his profession always possessed for me a great attraction. Indeed, I rapidly came to look upon him as my special guide, philosopher and friend. He, with Mr. Olmsted, perhaps he, even more than Mr. Olmsted, had in my opinion created Central Park."



Samuel Parsons

Fig. 16 Portrait of Samuel Parsons, Jr. from: *Memories of Samuel Parsons*, edited by Mabel Parsons (1926)

Samuel Jr. joined Vaux's firm "around 1879" and within a year became a partner (M. Parsons, 1926). In January of 1880, at the very start of his landscape architecture

career, he came to Boston to deliver a “prize lecture” to the Massachusetts Horticultural Society on “The Most Promising, New, Hardy, Ornamental Trees and Shrubs, and Their Tasteful and Effective Arrangement” (S. Parsons, 1881). It’s a remarkable article, filled with breathless descriptions of the rare Japanese plants that were just coming into the horticultural marketplace as a result of the collaboration between his father and Thomas Hogg. The article provides clear directions for gardeners on how these new plants should be used in the landscape:

The position of each plant is so related to the other, for purposes of beauty and perfect development that one delights in the fair proportion and entire unity of the design. It is a picture, and yet something more than a picture: a combination of foliage and grass, constructed not in servile imitation of nature, but on the principles employed by nature in her most pleasing work. The copse or glade is suggested, and yet the treatment of each plant of our lawn is very different from that of the wild wood, and indeed, more honorable to that plant’s highly cultured nature. Perfect maintenance and exquisite keeping are evident everywhere, from the skillfully-pruned shrub to the velvet turf that catches athwart its beautiful surface the level rays of the setting sun.

In 1881, Vaux was appointed Chief Landscape Architect for the New York City and, according to Parsons, he “insisted as the condition of accepting that I should join him,” a stipulation resulted in Parsons being appointed “Superintendent of Planting” for the Parks Department (M. Parsons, 1926). In that same year, the two men published a short book together, *Concerning Lawn Planting*, with the stated intention of “advancing the standard of landscape architecture in the United States.” Parsons was promoted to the position of Superintendent of Public Parks for New York City in 1885, in which position he undoubtedly would have been involved in the relocation of the remains of James Hogg’s Japanese plant collection to Central Park in 1888 (Sargent, 1888b; M. Parsons, 1926).

Vaux and Parsons worked together on numerous public and private landscape projects over the course of their twenty-five-year long relationship, including the selection of the site for the New York Botanical Garden in the Bronx in 1895. The idea for a botanical garden had originally come from the Torrey Botanical Club which created an eight-member Botanic Garden Committee in 1888 to generate public, political and financial support for the concept. Thomas Hogg was vice-president of the Club at this time and, in 1889, was elected chairman of the expanded Botanic Garden Committee. In this capacity, he shifted the Committee’s focus from generating public support for the garden to getting it incorporated through an act of the State Legislature (Britton, 1915). These efforts culminated in March 1891 when the Legislature passed a bill incorporating the New York Botanical Garden to be located on a 250-acre parcel of within a larger state-owned property known as Bronx Park. Governor David B. Hill signed the bill on April 28 which listed Thomas Hogg as one of the original forty-eight incorporators (Britton, 1896, 1915; Dunkak, 2007).

The legislation stipulated that the newly created Corporation needed to raise \$250,000 in subscriptions within five years before the land could be set aside for the Garden. The incorporators met this goal in 1895 and elected the Garden’s first Board of

Managers in that same year. The first act of the Board, as stipulated in the bill of incorporation, was to request that Commissioners of Public Parks—Calvert Vaux and Samuel Parsons Jr.—select a location for the Garden within Bronx Park. They chose a 250-acre parcel at the northwest end of the park containing an ancient grove of hemlock trees (*Tsuga canadensis*) and a portion of the Bronx River. The Board of Managers then requested Vaux and Parsons to produce a preliminary plan for the layout of the Garden which they accepted in October, 1895, just a month before Vaux's tragic death (Britton, 1896; Dunkak, 2007).

In 1899, Samuel Parsons became one of the founding members of the American Society of Landscape Architects along with ten other professionals, including the sons of Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux. Indeed, the society's initial organizational meeting took place in Parsons' New York office and he was elected its first vice-president (Disponzio, 2016). This passing of the generational baton marked the final step in the transformation of the traditional, horticulture-based field of Landscape Gardening—championed by Downing—into the modern, design-based profession of Landscape Architecture championed by Olmsted and Vaux. Having grown up in his father's nursery business and then gone on to a career in landscape architecture, Samuel Parsons was the personal embodiment of this transformation. His work on the New York Botanical Garden complimented that of Thomas Hogg and provided a fitting capstone to the saga of two great horticultural families that forever changed the face of the American landscape.

Thomas Hogg's Plant Introductions from Japan

Over the course of his two sojourns in Japan, Thomas Hogg introduced many plants into North America—including both wild species and horticultural selections. While the focus of this article is on Thomas Hogg's woody plant introductions—listed in the [Appendix](#)—it is important to remember that he was also responsible for introducing numerous herbaceous perennials, including North America's earliest cultivars of *Hosta* ('Decorata' and 'Undulata Albomarginata') (T., 1900), Japanese iris (*Iris ensata*) (J. Hogg, 1863, 1874b; T. Hogg 1864b; Thurber, 1870, 1878; Whitehead, 2011), and eulalia grass, *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Zebrina' (J. Hogg, 1874c; Meehan, 1874; Thurber, 1876b, 1877b). He also sent seeds of the "Yokohama squash" (a type of winter squash) to his brother James which became popular for its flavor, its long-storage capacity and its lack of fibers (Hovey, 1864) as well as seeds of an unusual corn plant with variegated leaves (*Zea mays* 'Japonica') (T. Hogg, 1864b; Thurber, 1866). Thomas Hogg also sent plants of the infamous invasive Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*) from Japan to his brother in 1867 or 68 (J. Hogg, 1875b). Two earlier introductions of this species (Thurber, 1868; J. C., 1872) consisted of plants introduced from Japan by von Siebold in the 1840s and imported into North America in the 1860s (Del Tredici, [in press](#)).

Unlike the situation with George Rogers Hall, whose introductions were catalogued in the oft-cited article from 1923 by his grandson James M. Howe Jr., there is no comprehensive list for the introductions of Thomas Hogg. Fortunately, the horticultural literature of the late nineteenth century is filled with references to Thomas Hogg's plants—most notably *Garden and Forest*

(edited by William Stiles and “conducted” by C. S. Sargent from 1888 through 1897), *The Gardener’s Monthly and Horticulturist* (edited by Thomas Meehan from 1859 through 1888) and the *American Agriculturist* (edited by George Thurber from 1863 through 1885). By combing through this literature with the help of internet searches, the author has been able to piece together a comprehensive list of Thomas Hogg’s woody plant introductions from Japan (see [Appendix](#)). The author has no doubt that continued searching will add more species to the list of Hogg’s introductions, especially among herbaceous perennials which are not specifically covered in this article. S. B. Parsons’ 94-page Kissena Nursery catalogue from 1887 was particularly important in helping the author determine which of Hogg’s plants actually made it out into the wider horticultural world. Interestingly, this catalogue specifically credits Hogg with the introduction of only two plants, but the phrases “new introduction from Japan” and “choice and rare” appear frequently, suggesting that the plants so designated probably came from Hogg. Many of the species on the list had been introduced into Europe before Thomas Hogg collected them—mainly by Philipp von Siebold, Robert Fortune, Carl Maximowicz and John Gould Veitch (Fortune, 1861, 1863; Siebold, 1863; Bretschneider, 1898). However, several of Hogg’s plants—most notably *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*, *Stewartia pseudocamellia* and *Symplocos paniculata*—were introduced into America well before they reached Europe.

Separating the introductions of George Rogers Hall from those of Thomas Hogg has proved a significant challenge given that the two men collected many of the same species (including *Acer palmatum*, *Castanea crenata*, *Chamycyparis pisifera*, *Pinus densiflora*, *Sciadopitys verticillata*, *Taxus cuspidata* and *Zelkova serrata*) and both of them relied on Samuel B. Parsons to propagate and distribute their introductions. As used in this article, the concept of introduction includes not only the first importation of a Japanese plant into North America, but also its successful propagation and distribution, as evidenced by its listing in the 1887 catalogue of Kissena Nurseries catalogue or some other such publication. By the author’s definition, *a plant that dies without being propagated and distributed has not been successfully introduced*. One of the problems with the lists of plants introduced by Hall is that there is little information about which of them were ever propagated and distributed, especially among the contents of the first shipment that went to Francis Parkman.

The task of compiling a list of Thomas Hogg’s introductions was also complicated by the fact that in the 1860s and 70s taxonomic knowledge of the Japanese flora was limited, and many species were either undescribed or described with multiple names. As a consequence, it is often difficult to say exactly what species, in terms of today’s taxonomy, past horticultural writers were referring to when they used a given name. Determining the identity of many of the woody plant cultivars that Hogg collected (as listed by S. B. Parsons in 1875) was not possible because no Latin name was provided or the cultivar descriptor was too vague to allow for precise identification. For these reasons, the list of Hogg’s woody plant cultivars is relatively short and only consists of those for which positive identification is possible. The author has

attempted to sort out such synonym problems using a variety of period botanical and horticultural publications—most notably Alfred Rehder's *Manuel of Cultivated Trees and Shrubs* (1927), von Siebold's nursery catalogue from 1863 and von Siebold and Zuccarini's beautifully illustrated *Flora Japonica* (1835–1870), a book which both Hogg and Parsons undoubtedly consulted for identification purposes.

A case study in the taxonomic confusion of the period is provided by an unnamed "dwarf Magnolia with round leaves, ferruginous on the underside" that Parsons received from Thomas Hogg in late 1873 (S. B. Parsons, 1875). He distributed the plant in his 1887 catalogue as *Magnolia parviflora* [now *M. sieboldii*], along with a separate Hogg introduction that he called *M. parviflora minor* (S. B. Parsons, 1884). The Arnold Arboretum received propagations of both plants in the 1880s and eventually identified them both as the *Magnolia x watsonii* [now *M. x weiseneri*], a hybrid between *M. sieboldii* and *M. obovata* that was not introduced into Europe until 1889—some twenty-five years after Hogg sent the first plant to Parsons.

The old plant records of the Arnold Arboretum have proved to be a rich source of information about Hogg's early Japanese introductions. Founded in 1872, the institution received many of the early propagations of Hogg's plants from Samuel Parsons' Kissena Nurseries between 1879 and 1890. A case in point is the porcelain berry (*Ampelopsis glandulosa* var. *brevipedunculata*) that is described in the 1887 Kissena Nursery catalogue as "new and rare," but the author failed to locate any reference to its introduction into North America in the literature. It turns out that the Arnold Arboretum received a porcelain berry plant (AA# 225–3) from Parsons in 1879, a date that strongly suggests that, like oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*), it was part of the miscellaneous collection of "seeds of about 150 sorts" that Hogg sent Parsons from Japan in the fall of 1874 (S. B. Parsons, 1875; Del Tredici, 2014). These two species, together with kudzu (*Pueraria montana* var. *lobata*) and sweet autumn clematis (*Clematis terniflora*) bring Hogg's introduction of woody Japanese vines that have become invasive in North America to four.

Be that as it may, Thomas Hogg was a product of his time—a time when America was embracing exotic plants with no thought about the future ecological implications of his efforts. This was the dawn of globalization and people were excited by the commercial and horticultural opportunities presented by the Japanese flora. A hundred plus years later, after the "law of unintended consequences" had asserted itself, people began to recognize the negative ecological consequences of the plant introduction work that had begun with such promise. The spread of invasive species, however, is only one side of the story; the other is the many well-behaved ornamental plants that have added beauty, utility and ecological functionality to gardens, parks and cities across North America.

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Appendix

Below is a complete listing of the woody plants that the author has determined are documented Thomas Hogg introductions into North America from Japan based on literature references from the period; also listed are four species that are likely, but undocumented Hogg introductions. Each species is listed with its **currently accepted Latin name**, followed by the **Latin name used in the Kissena Catalogue** if different [in brackets], followed by its **currently used common name**. The **date of introduction** comes from the 1927 edition of Alfred Rehder's *Manual of Cultivated Trees and Shrubs* and refers to a species' initial cultivation outside its native country. Following this (in parentheses) are **primary references from the literature** documenting the introduction of a specific species by Thomas Hogg: the initials **KN** stands for a listing in the 1887 *Kissena Nursery* catalogue followed by the appropriate page number; **FFJ**

refers to C. S. Sargent's 1894 *Notes on the Forest Flora of Japan* followed by the appropriate page number; **TH**1863 refers to James Hogg's inventory of Thomas Hogg's first shipment of plants as published in *The Horticulturist* in 1863; **TH**1875 refers to the inventory of plants Thomas Hogg presented to S. B. Parsons' for propagation as published by Parsons in *The American Garden* in 1875; and **SBP**1889 refers to S. B. Parsons' recollection of plants he got from Thomas Hogg as documented by "S." in *Garden and Forest* in 1889. Other **literature references** that mention the introduction of a specific plant are listed individually by author and date. At the end of many of the entries, the letters **AA** followed by the year indicate when the Arnold Arboretum first received a Thomas Hogg plant from Samuel B. Parsons or, in three instances, from George Thurber, who got the plants from James Hogg. And finally, the designation **2nd trip seed** indicates plants that were raised from seed collected by Hogg during his second trip to Japan in the fall of 1874.

Thomas Hogg's introductions of hardy, woody species from Japan into North America based on literature documentation or the fact that the Arnold Arboretum received a plant from Parsons in 1879.

Abies veitchii [*Picea Japonica*], Veitch fir, 1865 (**KN**:64; **FFJ**:83; **TH**1863) **AA**1880.

Acer carpinifolium, hornbeam-leaved maple, 1881 (**KN**:9; Meehan 1876; SB Parsons 1884).

Acer japonicum, full moon maple, 1864 (**KN**:9; Thurber 1877c, 1881) **AA**1879.

Ampelopsis glandulosa var. *brevipedunculosa* [*A. japonica*], porcelain berry, 1870 (**KN**:52) **AA**1879; **2nd trip seed**.

Aralia elata [*A. japonica*, *Dimorphanthus Mandchuricus*], Japanese angelica tree, 1830 (**KN**:14; **SBP**1889); **2nd trip seed**.

Berberis amurensis [*B. Hakodate*], red-stemmed barberry, 1892 (**KN**:36, 92; Sargent 1990a; Trumpy 1893b) **AA**1880; **2nd trip seed**.

Callicarpa japonica, Japanese beautyberry, about 1845 (**KN**:36; Sargent 1922) **AA**1879; **2nd trip seed**.

Castanea crenata [*C. japonica*], Japanese chestnut, 1876 (**KN**:15; **SBP**1889; Powell 1889) **AA**1880; **2nd trip seed**.

Celastrus orbiculatus [*C. punctatus*], oriental bittersweet, 1860 (**KN**:53; Del Tredici 2014) **AA**1879; **2nd trip seed**.

Cercidiphyllum japonicum, katsura tree, 1864 or 65 (**KN**:16; **TH**1875; T. Hogg 1879a,b; **SBP**1889).

Clematis terniflora [*C. paniculata*], sweet autumn clematis, 1864? (Sargent 1890b); **2nd trip seed**.

Clethra barbinervis, Japanese clethra, 1870 (**KN**:37; SB Parsons 1890) **AA**1890; **2nd trip seed**.

Cornus controversa [*C. macrophylla*, *brachypoda*], giant pagoda dogwood, before 1880 (**FFJ**:48) **AA**1879; **2nd trip seed**.

Cornus kousa [*Benthamia Japonica*, *B. J. major*, *minor*], kousa dogwood, 1875 (**KN**:36, 90; **FFJ**:47; Libby 1888; **SBP**1889) **AA**1884; **2nd trip seed**.

Corylopsis spicata, spike winterhazel, 1863 (**KN**:38; **TH**1875).

Daphne genkwa, lilac daphne, 1843 (**KN**:39; **TH**1875; Meehan 1876; **SBP**1889) **AA**1880.

Daphniphyllum macropodum [*D. glaucescens*], 1879 (KN:85; TH1875) AA1880.
Dendropanax trifidus, ivy tree [*D. japonica*] (KN:85; Saunders 1878); **2nd trip seed.**

Deutzia scabra var. *sieboldiana* [*D. scabra vera*], rough-leaved deutzia, cult. 1890 (KN:39; TH1875; Harris 1882; SBP1889) AA1880.

Diospyros kaki [*D. kiaki*], Japanese persimmon, about 1870 (KN:18; TH1863; Meehan 1874; Thurber 1877b).

Elaeagnus multiflora [*E. longipes*], goumi berry, 1862 (KN:40; SBP1889; Saunders 1878); **2nd trip seed.**

Euonymus hamiltonianus [*E. Yeddoensis*], Yeddo euonymus, 1865 (KN:40, 93; FFJ:26; Rehder 1905c) AA1884; **2nd trip seed.**

Hamamelis japonica, Japanese witchhazel, 1862 (KN:41; TH1875).

Hydrangea paniculata, panicle hydrangea, before 1864 (KN:42; SBP1889; Sargent 1893b; Trumpy 1893b) AA1880; **2nd trip seed.**

Hydrangea petiolaris [*H. scandens*], climbing hydrangea, 1874 (KN:57; TH1875) AA1880.

Ilex serrata, Japanese winterberry, 1866 (FFJ:25; Rehder 1905a) AA1880; **2nd trip seed.**

Larix kaempferi [*L. leptolepis*], Japanese larch, 1861 (KN:22; TH1863; Meehan 1871).

Magnolia obovata [*M. hypoleuca*], Japanese umbrella magnolia, 1865 (KN:24; FFJ:9; J Hogg 1875a; Sargent 1888b & c) AA1880.

Magnolia x weiseneri [*M. parviflora*, *M. P. minor*], Watson's magnolia, cult. 1889 (KN:24, 91; TH1875; SB Parsons 1884; Sargent 1895) AA1880.

Photinia villosa, [*Amelanchier Japonica*] Japanese photinia, about 1865 (KN:87; TH1875; Sargent 1888a) AA1879.

Pueraria montana var. *lobata* [*Dolichos Japonicus*], kudzu, cult. 1885 (KN:56; Sargent 1893c) AA1879; **2nd trip seed.**

Ribes fasciculatum [*R. japonicum*], Japanese current, 1884 (KN:46; Rehder 1905b) AA1884; **2nd trip seed.**

Schizophragma hydrangeoides, Japanese hydrangea vine, 1880 (KN:58; TH1875; T. Hogg 1879a; SBP1889).

Stachyurus praecox, pearl bush, 1865 (KN:48; FFJ:18); **2nd trip seed.**

Stewartia pseudocamellia [*Stuartia Japonica*, *S. J. grandiflora*], Japanese stewartia, 1868 (KN:32; FFJ:34; TH1875; Saunders 1878; Sargent 1896) AA1879.

Styrax japonicus [*S. japonica*], Japanese snowbell, 1862 (KN:48; TH1863; SBP1889; Sargent 1888b).

Styrax obassia [*Pterostyrax hispidum*], fragrant snowbell, 1879 (KN:45, 93; JH1863).

Symplocos paniculata [*S. japonica crataegoides*], sapphireberry, 1875 (KN:94; TH1875; Parsons 1888a; Sargent 1892a) AA1880.

Tsuga diversifolia [*T. sieboldii nana*], northern Japanese hemlock, 1861 (KN:92; TH1863; Meehan 1874; SBP1889) AA1889.

Viburnum sieboldii [*V. japonicum latifolium*], Siebold viburnum, 1880 (KN:50; Sargent 1889b) AA1880; **2nd trip seed.**

Some of Thomas Hogg's important, documented introductions of Japanese cultivars into North America.

Acer palmatum ‘Atropurpureum,’ ‘Dissectum Atropurpureum,’ ‘Sanguineum,’ etc. [*Acer polymorphum*], Japanese maple (KN:9–10; TH1875; Meehan 1876; Thurber 1877c, 1881; SB Parsons 1880; S Parsons 1881; Sargent 1888b) AA1880.

Acer japonicum ‘Aconitifolium,’ ‘Aureum,’ full moon maple (KN:9; Thurber 1877c, 1881; S Parsons 1881) AA1879.

Camellia japonica variegated cultivars: numbers 1–7, Japanese camellia (KN:84; Meehan 1874).

Chaenomeles japonica ‘Tricolor’ [*Cydonia japonica tricolor*, *Pyrus japonica*], variegated Japanese quince (KN:39; TH1875; SBP1889) AA1884.

Chamaecyparis obtusa ‘Nana,’ ‘Nana Aurea,’ etc. [*Retinospora obtusa*], Hinoki cypress (KN:68; JH1863; Meehan 1874; S Parsons 1881; SBP1889) AA1880.

Chamaecyparis pisifera ‘Filifera Aurea,’ etc. [*Retinospora filifera aurea*], Sawara cypress (KN:67–69; TH1863; TH1875; Meehan 1874; Saunders 1878; S Parsons 1881; SBP1889) AA1880.

Kerria japonica ‘Picta’ [*K. J. foliis variegata*, *Corchorus Japonica*], variegated kerria (KN:43; TH1875).

Eriobotrya japonica ‘Variegata’ [*E. J. folis variegatis*], variegated loquat (KN:85; TH1875).

Hydrangea macrophylla ‘Thomas Hogg’ [*H. hortensia*] (KN:42; Thurber 1876a).

Pinus thunbergii ‘Oculus-draconis’ [*P. massoniana variegata*], dragon eye or sun ray pine (KN:66; TH1875; Meehan 1874; Saunders 1878; S Parsons 1881).

Prunus subhirtella ‘Pendula’ [*Cerasus Japonica rosea pendula*], Higan weeping cherry (KN:16; TH1875; Falconer 1894).

Rhus chinensis var. [*R. osbeckii* “new variety”], Chinese sumac, 1784 (KN:29) AA1877 (from J. Hogg via G. Thurber).

Rosa rugosa ‘Alba’, white salt spray rose (SB Parsons 1888b; Thurber 1875) AA1878 (from James Hogg via G. Thurber).

Spirea japonica ‘Bullata’ [*S. callosa crispifolia*], crispleaf spirea (KN:47; Saunders 1878; Trumpy1893a; Woolson 1881) AA1877 (from James Hogg via G. Thurber).

Likely Thomas Hogg woody plant introductions from Japan listed in the 1887 Kissena Nurseries catalogue and sent by S. B. Parsons to the Arnold Arboretum in the 1880s, but not documented in the literature.

Clematis stans, erect Japanese clematis, no date (KN:37, “new introduction”) AA1884.

Ligustrum obtusifolium [*L. ibota*], 1870 (KN: 43, “Japan species”) AA1884.

Lonicera tartarica var. *morrowii* [*L. Morowii*], Morrow’s honeysuckle, about 1875 (KN:93, “Asiatic species”) AA1884.

Orixa japonica [*Celastrus Orixa*], Japanese orixa, 1870 (KN:37, “choice new shrub”) AA1888.